

**Superior Court of California
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**



Wynne S. Carvill, Presiding Judge

Chad Finke, Executive Officer

René C. Davidson Courthouse
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 3, 2019

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA: The Superior Court of Alameda County partners with Peralta Community College District partners on a first-of-its-kind program for Legal Processing Assistant and Courtroom Clerk certificates.

In a powerful pairing of academia and the judiciary, the Superior Court of Alameda County and Peralta Community College District (PCCD) announced today a partnership to offer a pathway into employment as a Legal Processing Assistant (LPA) or Courtroom Clerk.

A new program offered through the Paralegal Studies Program at Merritt College in Oakland, Calif. beginning this coming fall semester will prepare students for successful careers in public service. Programs for both tracks (LPA and Courtroom Clerk) can be completed within one-to-two semesters and will include work-based learning opportunities, application support, and interview preparation. Internships with the Superior Court are also being developed.

"The new partnership will make training for Legal Processing Assistant and Courtroom Clerk positions more accessible to the local community and equip graduates to participate in the workforce and earn a living wage," said Marie Amboy, strong workforce director, Peralta Community College District. "In turn, the Court will have access to a more diverse local talent pool with the skills needed to be competitive in today's marketplace."

According to Amboy, this is the first time a community college district has partnered with a local court and received support from their local union to address existing barriers to employment and to develop certificates and a clear pathway to livable wage jobs.

"The Court appreciates being a part of this unprecedented partnership with Peralta," said Chad Finke, court executive officer, Superior Court of Alameda County. "We view this as a 'win-win-win' situation for our employees, job seekers and, most importantly, the public."

Because these are online courses, Amboy said they are ideal for working students who are seeking a job with a living wage, great benefits, and inroads into additional roles and long-term careers in the justice system.

"Another key benefit is that the course program eliminates the requirement to take an exam, something when used as the primary criterion for placement can create a barrier to candidates who might otherwise excel at their job," added Amboy.

The Court will be working hand-in-hand with PCCD to develop the content of the courses.

The Legal Processing Assistant Certificate will include these Merritt College Paralegal Studies courses:

- Parlg 1: Introduction to Law and the Legal Profession
- Parlg 4: Law Office Management
- Parlg 6: Legal Research
- Parlg 16: Seminar in Paralegal Studies Internship
- COPED 474A: Occupational Work Experience in Paralegal Studies

The Courtroom Clerk Certificate will include these Merritt College Paralegal Studies courses:

- Parlg 1: Introduction to Law and the Legal Profession
- Parlg 4: Law Office Management
- Parlg 6: Legal Research
- Parlg 8: Intro to Civil Procedure and Litigation Practice
- Parlg 16: Seminar in Paralegal Studies Internship
- COPED 474A: Occupational Work Experience in Paralegal Studies

To apply to the Fall 2019 program, students must complete and submit an application by Wednesday, July 31, 2019. For more information or to request an application form, please email strongworkforce@peralta.edu.

Courtroom Clerks are responsible for clerical courtroom activities, interacting with the attorneys and the public, administering oaths, assisting with the impaneling juries, and are responsible for the inventory and safekeeping of the exhibits. A Courtroom Clerk currently makes between \$26 and \$31 per hour.

Legal Processing Assistants receive, examine, prepare, file, process and maintain a variety of legal documents; assist the public in person and over the telephone; and, verify, enter and retrieve information from automated and manual record keeping systems. LPAs are distinguished from Courtroom Clerks in that the latter are primarily responsible for keeping accurate minutes of court proceedings and operating within a courtroom setting. An LPA currently makes between \$22 and \$26 an hour.

While the program's benefits to job seekers and the Court are clear, the program is also supported by the Court's largest labor union, which sees it as an excellent opportunity to up-train its members.

"SEIU couldn't be more excited about the opportunities this program will bring to our community, as well as increase the Superior Court's accessibility to additional qualified candidates," said Kasha Clarke, chapter president, SEIU Local 1021.

"Our Merritt College Paralegal Studies Program is experienced in training future paralegals, law clerks, attorneys, legal secretaries and various other positions within the legal industry, and this partnership will create job opportunities for our existing and future students," said Linnea N. Willis, program director, Paralegal Studies Department, Merritt College. "Court clerks are the backbone of the court system and we look forward not only to educating students to become legal processing assistants, but also to educating existing legal processing assistants so they can obtain advancement and promotion within the Alameda County Superior Court system."

About the Peralta Community College District

Founded in 1964, the Peralta Community College District (PCCD) is a collaborative community of colleges comprised of Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, and Laney and Merritt colleges in Oakland, Calif. The Peralta Colleges provide a dynamic multicultural learning environment offering accessible, high-quality educational programs and services; including two-year degrees, certificates, and university transfer programs, to nearly 30,000 students. PCCD is home to award-winning Peralta TV (Comcast ch. 27/28, AT&T ch. 99) and public radio KGPC 96.9 FM. To learn more about The Peralta Colleges, visit www.peralta.edu

About Merritt College

Nestled in the hills above San Francisco Bay, **Merritt College** in Oakland, Calif. offers students the opportunity to study in one of the most dramatic natural settings in Northern California. With a panorama that includes the Golden Gate Bridge and the Pacific Ocean, Merritt's striking vistas provide a breathtaking backdrop for a packed roster of first-rate academic and vocational programs. One of the four colleges that make up the Peralta Community College District, Merritt boasts acclaimed programs in cybersecurity, community social services, registered nursing, child development, nutrition & dietetics, environmental studies, and landscape horticulture. Visit www.merritt.edu

About the Superior Court of California, County of Alameda

The Superior Court of Alameda County is established under Article VI of the Constitution of California. It functions as the trial court for all case types filed in Alameda County, including criminal, civil, family, juvenile, and traffic. The Court has 73 authorized judicial positions, nearly 700 employees, and ten court facilities available to serve the public. In addition, the Court offers a host of other services, including a Self-Help Center and a robust Collaborative Courts program.

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